

The Drug Collection of the University of Vienna

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Abstract

The University of Vienna's drug collection, located in the Department of Pharmacognosy, represents a comprehensive and valuable group of medicinal drugs, accumulated over 150 years.



Fig. 1 - Mumia; Head of a Mummy, used for wound healing and plasters until the end of the 18th century

The drug collection represents a comprehensive and valuable collection of medicinal drugs, which have been accumulated over a period of about 150 years. These samples not only originate from Europe but from all parts of the world and bear witness to scientific expeditions, the rich variety of exotic markets and the treasures of the *materia medica* of foreign cultures.

The Viennese collection was founded in 1849 by Karl Damian Schroff, Professor of Pathology and Pharmacology at the Medical Faculty in Vienna, who was entrusted with teachings of Pharmacognosy for students of medicine and pharmacy. He used drug material, minerals and chemicals to illustrate his lectures and to familiarise the students with medicinal ingredients.

In 1854 he purchased a large drug collection (2,812 drug samples) from Theodor Martius, Professor for Pharmacognosy in Erlangen, which was the basis of today's collection.

Further acquisitions came from scientific expeditions such as the circumnavigation of the globe conducted by the imperial frigate Novara (1857-1859) and the donation of the drug collection by the *Allgemeiner Österreichischer Apothekerverein*. The drug collections of Franz Berger, director of the druggist's school in Vienna, and of Tadeus Reichstein, professor at the University in Basel, also enriched our collection greatly.

Despite losses and damages incurred by several moves and two world wars, our collection comprises today nearly 18,000 drug samples including about 300 of animal origin.



Fig. 2 - Different qualities of tea leaf samples, 19th century

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<http://bibliothek.univie.ac.at/sammlungen/drogensammlung.html>